

Message Text

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ACTION OPR-02

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 9852

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP, UR

SUBJ: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

REF: A. MOSCOW 9717

B. STATE 133108

1. HERE IS ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFOR REQUESTED REF B.

2. MACHULISHCHE AIRPORT IS A MILITARY AIRPORT LOCATED 4.5
MILES SOUTH OF MINSK. DETAILS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

3. VICTORY MONUMENT IN MIDDLE OF MINSK IS LOCATED IN TRAFFIC
CIRCLE ON A MAIN CITY STREET--LENINSKIY PROSPEKT. IT IS AN
OBELISK COMMEMORATING THE VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II, AND IS A SITE
WHERE VISITING STATE LEADERS LAY WREATHS. NORMALLY AN ORCHESTRA
PERFORMS THE STATE HYMNS AS A PART OF THIS CEREMONY.

4. ZASLAVL' IS A COUNTRY GUEST HOUSE FOR RANKING GUESTS,
WHERE PRESIDENT POMPIDOU AND BREZHNEV MET IN JANUARY 1973.
ZASLAVL' IS 15 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF MINSK IN A FOREST ON
A SHORE OF A RESERVOIR CALLED THE "MINSK SEA." THE GUEST HOUSE
AND RECEPTION HOUSE ARE SIDE-BY-SIDE AND HAVE IDENTICAL EXTERIORS.
BUILT WITHIN THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE BUILDINGS ARE RENDERED
IN CONCRETE-AND-GLASS MODERN STYLE WITH EXTERIOR SPIRAL STAIR-
WAYS.

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5. THE KHATYN MEMORIAL, LOCATED 66 KILOMETERS NORTH-EAST OF MINSK, IS BUILT ON THE SITE OF A VILLAGEWHICH WAS BURNED IN MARCH 1943 BY SS TROOPERS. ALL 149 INHABITANTS WERE HERDED INTO A BARN AND BURNED ALIVE; ONE MANAGED TO SURVIVE AND IS COMMEMORATED BY A STRIKING STATUE AT THE MEMORIAL. THE SITES OF EACH OF THE VILLAGE'S 26 HOUSES IS NOW MARKED BY THE REPLICA OF A CHIMNEY, TOPPED BY A BELL. THE BELLS TOLL IN UNISON EVERY FEW MINUTES TO HONOR THE 2.2 MILLION BELORUSSIAN CASUALTIES DURING THE WAR. A CEMETERY OF VILLAGES COMMEMORATES THE 136 BELORUSSIAN VILLAGES DESTROYED AS WAS KHATYN. ANOTHER MONUMENT DENOTES THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN THE REPUBLIC AND THE DEAD OF BELORUSSIA'S CITIES. AT THE CENTER OF THE COMPLEX IS A BLACK MARBLE CUBE WITH FOUR NICHEs -- THREE CONTAIN LIVING BIRCH TREES, THE FOURTH AN ETERNAL FLAME SYMBOLIZING THE ONE BELORUSSIAN OUT OF EVERY FOUR WHO PERISHED IN THE WAR.

STOESSEL

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